

**Natural Resources Advisory Board  
June 29, 2010 Minutes  
IDNR Headquarters**

**Members Present:**

Randy Blackford	Dick Wren	Pat Kernan	Gene Abbott
Larry Lucas	Dale Stewart	Claudia Emken	

**IDNR Staff:**

Marc Miller	Deborah Stone	Travis Loyd	Mitch Cohen
Tim Schweizer	Jim Herkert	Ray Marshalla	John Buhnerkempe
Tami Evans	Chad Bartman	Tom Dilello	Sue Eubanks
Jan Nation	Ray Wichus		

Chairman Emken opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Roll call was given; quorum was met.

A motion to adopt the June 29, 2010 agenda was provided by Dick Wren; Pat Kernan provided the second.

Dale Stewart motioned to adopt the April 6, 2010 minutes; Randy Blackford provided the second.

**Bike Grants – Tom Dilello** - Sue Eubanks presented the FY2011 bike path grant applications. The bike path grant program gives local units of government an opportunity to acquire and/or develop land for non-motorized bicycle paths. This is a 50/50 matching grant program, with a maximum of \$200,000 for development projects, with no limit for acquisition projects. Applications are due March 1 each year, staff performs desk reviews, site visits are made and the projects are then graded.

21 projects requesting \$3.6 million dollars have been received; only \$1 million is available for FY11. Board members were provided with a list of projects in rank order. Grants staff recommended approving projects 2-7. Discussion on various projects ensued. Gene Abbott motioned to approve the recommendations provided by grants staff, projects 2-7; Dick Wren provided the second. No opposition was heard, motion carried.

**Crossbow Subcommittee – Pat Kernan** – The crossbow subcommittee has met and recommends allowing the use of crossbows in counties that have high deer populations. The committee suggested that DNR send out a survey to its hunting constituents for their input on the use of crossbows, and its effectiveness to see if it could be an option for the State. Chairman Emken stated that as an official measurer for the Pope & Young Club, she is opposed to allowing crossbow use beyond what the law already allows.

**Waterfowl Season Dates – John Buhnerkempe** – John provided the board and attending guests with a power point presentation and spoke to the numerous analysis'/approaches staff have taken to reach a target of what is right for the public hunter.

Biological framework for how states set duck hunting season dates is provided by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Framework is based on a variety issues and data. Illinois has three waterfowl zones: North, Central and South.

The recommended duck season dates were established by the planning process provided in 2006. This approach maximizes hunter satisfaction, recruitment & retention and is designed to address each zone. Results of the hunter and aerial surveys are also included in recommendations.

Director Miller stated that when he came to IDNR, it was clear that his mission was to restore integrity to the Agency. Last year's decision to go with early season dates was put in place to offer fairness. It is hoped, that again this year, a decision based on social and natural science will continue to maximize opportunities for the largest amount of people and have a process that is fair, has integrity and that offers the most amount of hunting opportunities for all of Illinois.

Claudia added that guests who have signed in will be given three minutes to provide testimony.

**Recommendations for early seasons statewide include:**

**Teal** - September 4-19

**Canada Geese** – September 1-15

**Guest Comments:**

Kevin Dudley suggested that the Department do away with the early goose season. John stated that there are areas that have residential geese problems and that the early seasons are beneficial to maintaining the population.

Scott Bryant, Migratory Waterfowlers added that the early goose season is set by the Federal government. Illinois has nothing to do with the season.

Randy Blackford asked how many geese are taken during the early season last year in Southern Illinois. Ray Marshalla added that the data is just coming in, but harvest data for the early season statewide is 16,212 with 1,490 geese harvested in the southern zone. Ray added that closing the season will have zero impact on the population of resident geese and that only 4% of hunters in the southern zone believe it is too long.

Karl Fraley suggested trying to compromise and cut the harvest in the Southern zone from 2 to 1.

John Tranquilli representing the Rend Lake area stated that there are individuals in the northern area of the southern zone that like the early season opportunities and would like to see it stay.

Randy Blackford motioned to approve the early season dates as presented by staff; Dale Stewart provided the second. Larry Lucas added that it's premature to vote on the early seasons if data is not fully available. If there are not geese in southern Illinois an early season does not make sense.

Claudia added that the motion is to accept the recommendations for the early seasons as recommended by staff. All board members present were in favor; no opposition was heard.

**Recommendations for Regular 2010-2011 Waterfowl Season Dates:**

**Youth:** October 9 & 10 for North, October 23 & 24 for Central and November 13 & 14 for South.

**Canada Geese:** North Zone - October 16 – January 8; Central Zone – October 30-November 14 & November 24-January 31; South Zone – November 25-November 28 & December 1-January 31

**Snow Geese:** North Zone - October 16-January 8; Central Zone – October 30-January 31; South Zone – November 25-January 31

**White Fronted Geese:** North Zone – October 29-January 8; Central Zone – November 21-January 31; South Zone – November 25-January 31

**Duck:** North Zone - October 16-December 14; Central Zone – October 30-December 28; South Zone November 25-January 23.

Discussion ensued regarding harvest data for public and commercial hunting areas as not all areas complete or track data. Claudia added that if there is a way to statistically break out the public hunting areas vs private areas it would give the board an opportunity to see how these sites are utilized, who uses them and what recreational opportunities are provided.

Larry asked if there were options with these recommendations. Claudia added that the board can make any recommendation. Those recommendations will be sent to the Director and the Director may or may not agree with them.

The five year plan process will begin in June 2011. There will be opportunities throughout this process for public input. Pat Kernan suggested that the Department ask for constituent groups to submit a list of 10 questions that they would like to see addressed as part of the five year plan process.

Larry commented that DNR has a responsibility to set dates for the whole state, and that he would like to see the hunter survey eliminated and have data collected by county. Larry also recommended that the Department give the University of Illinois' Earth Science Department an opportunity to look at the date process independently without bias.

Dick Wren complimented the staff on their hard work and added that if the board recommends changing the recommendations made by IDNR, to make sure there are valid reasons.

Chairman Emken opened the discussion up to the visiting guests. Sixteen guests signed in and were given the opportunity to provide testimony on waterfowl and zone line issues. Comments included:

Open season November 14, this maximizes the Rend Lake & Carlyle areas.

Make fair decisions for the entire southern zone.

Reject the late season for this year.

Alter between early and late season opener every other year.

Equalize & compromise for the public hunter, not the private clubs. Private hunt clubs can hunt early but the state areas are frozen. IDNR should be about the public hunter.

Survey is slanted; no one agrees with the results, it's unreliable.

If public input is really wanted then why have a meeting at 1:00 p.m. on a Tuesday?

Support for a 4<sup>th</sup> zone line.

Change the zone line; move the Carlyle area into the Central zone.

Discussion ensued on the hunter survey. Ray Marshall stated that the survey was sent to 25,000 individuals based on duck stamp purchases. This survey was to look at hunter data, zone line changes and was designed to be an alternative for the next five years.

Randy motioned to approve the 2010-2011 waterfowl season dates as presented by staff; Dick Wren provided the second. Roll call was taken; motion failed.

Pat Kernan motioned to approve the dates by zone; Larry Lucas provided the second. No opposition was heard.

Pat Kernan provided a motion to approve the Northern zone dates as presented by staff; Dale Stewart provided the second. No opposition was heard.

Dale Stewart motioned to approve the season dates as presented by IDNR staff for the central zone; Pat Kernan provided the second. No opposition was heard.

Larry Lucas motioned to approve the following for the Southern zone:

Ducks - November 13 – January 11

Canada Geese – November 13 & 14 and November 29 – January 31.

Youth Hunt – October 30 & 31

Snow - November 13 – January 31

White Front – November 21 – January 31

Dale Stewart provided the second; 2 opposed; motion carried.

Randy Blackford added that he believed that IDNR staff are the experts and felt it could be a mistake to move away from their recommendations. Pat Kernan agreed but stated that fairness is needed.

Director Miller added that we are trying to make sure this process is honest. The board has come to their own opinions and conclusions. The hunter survey gave the Department the justification for fairness. 66% of the survey asked for a late opener. The Agency needs to make sure we do the best for all people that hunt. If the survey preference is for a late opener, it should be considered in the decision making process. We need to make sure the agency keeps in control of making these decisions.

Claudia thanked IDNR staff for the hard work, and appreciates their professionalism. Recommendations will be forwarded on to the Director for his final decision.

Lynn Wilcox, representing Illinois Bowhunters Society asked who would be included in the survey for crossbow issues. Pat Kernan replied that the survey would be sent to archery and gun hunters and that he would like to see more kids get outdoors and felt that this could be one way to do so. Mr. Wilcox asked that his group and others alike be involved so they could provide input. Claudia added that the subcommittee met but there have not been any proposals or recommendations from IDNR.

The next meeting is Tuesday, October 26; OSLAD grant hearings are scheduled for September 28.

Randy Blackford motioned to adjourn; Pat Kernan provided the second.

